

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Minoru Kimura, 75, retired medical doctor

*"When I first started practicing over there, about every ten minutes a car used to pass either Kalihi way or Downtown way. And you used to be able to park your car right in front of your office all day, and nobody squawked. But, now days, you can't do that. . . ."*

Minoru Kimura, Japanese, the sixth of eight children, was born on June 6, 1909, in Makaha, Oahu. His immigrant father, Yonekichi Kimura, was a farmer in Makaha Valley and Keaau, Oahu, and a sugarcane worker in Waipahu.

When Minoru was in the third grade, the family moved to Palama. They stayed there for three or four years, until they found a home on Kalihi's Rose Street.

Minoru attended Kaiulani School and McKinley High School, graduating in 1929. He then attended the University of Hawaii and Tulane University where he received his medical degree in 1936. He interned in Mainland hospitals and returned to the islands three years later, beginning a near forty-year practice in Kalihi.

Retired since 1978, Minoru now enjoys family life with his wife, children, and grandchildren in Nuuanu, Oahu. He occasionally enrolls in classes at the University of Hawaii and tends the garden surrounding his home.

Tape No. 11-11-1-83

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Minoru Kimura (MKI)

December 20, 1983

Nuuanu, Oahu

BY: Michiko Kodama (MKO)

MKO: This is an interview with Dr. Minoru Kimura at his home in Nuuanu, Oahu on December 20, 1983.

Dr. Kimura, can you tell me when and where you were born?

MKI: I was born in Makaha on June 6, 1909.

MKO: Can you tell me how many brothers and sisters you have?

MKI: I had six brothers and one sister.

MKO: Can you tell me what number child you were in the family?

MKI: I was sixth in the family.

MKO: What were your parents' names?

MKI: My father's name was Yonekichi Kimura. My mother's name was Ume Kimura.

MKO: I don't know how much you've heard about your parents' background and life in Japan, but can you share whatever knowledge you have about their life in Japan?

MKI: I don't know anything about my mother because she hasn't said anything about her life in Japan. But my father, as a youngster, worked at a salt factory. Well, those days they used to dry the seawater and make the water evaporate and take the salt out of it.

And I don't know how they came to Hawaii, but both of them came together, on what ship, I don't know. It was about the year 1898. They were first shipped to Kohala where they worked. They had a contract here [for] three years. At the end of the contract here, they came to Honolulu expecting to go back to Japan.

But, Mr. Jim Holt, who owned Makaha Valley from the mountain tip to

the sea, wanted to make a coffee plantation there, and they wanted people to work there. The pay was better than the [sugar] plantation so he [MKI's father] went there and pretty soon he was chosen as the foreman of the place. And they planted quite a lot of coffee plants. But before the coffee plants matured, Jim Holt got sick. He went to San Francisco to have an operation and unfortunately he died over there, so the plantation was abandoned.

After that, my father started agriculture by himself, mostly planting watermelon. He used to make fairly good money at that time, but that was one crop a year. So the rest of the time he raised pumpkins and vegetables and things like that. But with eight children, money was scarce.

After working in Makaha Valley for some time, he went over to a place known as Keaau. Keaau is beyond Makaha Valley, this side of Makua. He raised watermelon over there again. He did fairly well, but he liked to gamble (chuckles) and he lost quite a lot of money. And we had a pretty hard life. My mother and the children lived in Makaha Valley, and my father lived in Keaau for a while.

By the way, Makaha Valley had a whole lot of water those days. And what we kids used to do is to go into the river. You know what 'o'opu is? We used to catch 'o'opu--they were fairly large 'o'opus--big head and they were about six or seven inches long; that was our protein. Besides that there were plenty of goats in the mountain, and my third brother used to go up in the mountain and shoot goats. In those days we didn't have any refrigerator so when he brought back the goat, we cut the goat, stripped it and made pipi kaula out of it. And that was the extent of our protein.

MKO: You know, in that area of Makaha, what types of people were living there?

MKI: I forgot to tell you, we were the only ones in the Valley. But the nearest neighbor was about two miles away, and there were only four families living there. George Meyer, Richardson, Yamashita, and Sugai. George Meyer was the foreman for the Makaha Ranch. Makaha used to have a whole lot of cows in those days. Richardson owned a fairly large piece of land, and he raised mostly pigs. Mr. Yamashita, he used to milk the cow and go down to Waianae and sell the milk. Mr. Sugai was the supervisor of the river. Any obstruction in the river, he had to clean it up and make the river run into two reservoirs.

Incidentally, the Makaha River used to run toward the Makaha Kai, but when Waianae plantation started to raise sugar cane in Makaha, they diverted the water to a central part of Makaha Valley. They had two large reservoirs. And the 'o'opu, I understand, has to go to the ocean to spawn and then come up. When they made the reservoir, the supply of 'o'opu diminished. There were quite a lot of funa (a kind of carp). Well, funa used to be in that reservoir; the funa used to be about six inches long and big fat ones.

We had to walk about six miles to and from school and [the] two ponds were very much of a temptation to us, [to] go over there and fish instead of going to school. We used to play hookey quite a bit. Mr. Nobriga, Arthur Nobriga and Ted Nobriga's father, was the principal of Waianae School and every time we played hookey, he used to call us into the office and ask us questions; ask me why didn't I come to school. My excuse always was I had sore feet. I was the smallest so I didn't get any spanking but my two brothers got spankings. (Chuckles)

Well, after a while, life in Waianae became pretty difficult. Of course, we didn't have any trouble with food because there were plenty of fruits over there: avocados, bananas, oranges, mountain apple. You know what pohā is? The shells are very brittle. You know those? They are sweet, you know. They're not the liliko'i that you have now. The liliko'i that you have now is kinda leathery. But those, well, call it liliko'i, they grew way up in the mountain, and they were bright yellow when they ripen. They were very sweet. We used to have all kinds of fruits. Watercress grew in the river and all you had to do was go there and cut it and take it home. Besides, my mother planted vegetables and sweet potatoes and taro and things like that. So we had plenty of food to eat but when we went to Waipahu, growing up at a plantation camp, there we had nothing natural. Everything you had to do and buy. Life was harder there than in Makaha Valley. In Makaha Valley at least we didn't starve, we had plenty of food there.

The education at Waianae, I think, wasn't too good. When I went to Waipahu, the second grade, they kept me back one year. They said my education is not so good, so I stayed back one year. From then on I never did flunk any.

Then when I was in third grade we moved to Honolulu. We stayed at one room, the whole family stayed in one room on Kanoa Street in Palama.

MK0: Before you move too much more into the Palama part of your life, I want to ask you a few questions about Waipahu. I was wondering, do you remember what camp you stayed in in Waipahu?

MK1: Camp Eight.

MK0: What did the camp look like back then?

MK1: Camp was just barracks. (Housing consisted of one room for one family and there were no indoor toilet facilities. But, there was an outhouse--for both males and females.) The kitchen was in a separate place. A married couple had their own kitchen, but single people had to have their food at the community kitchen. There was one woman, Mrs. Yamamoto, that used to do the cooking and had to feed a whole lot of bachelors. That was quite a job for her, but she enjoyed it. Well, I think she enjoyed it. She had to make



lunch for them to eat during the lunch time. Then when they came back, she had to feed them again. The workers went to work about five o'clock in the morning and then they came back about 3:30 in the afternoon.

MK0: What kind of work was your father doing?

MKI: My father was just (planting) cane, weeding, watering, and so forth. When the cane got mature, they harvested that, and hāpai kō. I had a tough life. But, is that enough about Waipahu?

MK0: I was wondering, for yourself, as a child growing up in Waipahu, what did you like or dislike about Waipahu?

MKI: Waipahu, of course, we were strangers over there. When we went to school the first year, a whole lot of people were hostile to us and ostracized us. Different camps fought (against) each other, and my brother and I used to fight against the others. But after a while it became all right. Here again we had to walk about six miles back and forth to school. You know, when you're about six or seven years old, and [you] walk twelve miles a day, that's quite a job. But we didn't mind it. You get used to walking, and then you don't get so tired. But, if you walk twelve miles a day all of a sudden, you get tired.

MK0: So in the beginning it was hard?

MKI: Yes.

MK0: I know you said that the living was hard there because there weren't that many wild fruits and fishes and things . . .

MKI: [In] Waipahu, we didn't have any wild fruit at all. The only fruit that we could get was at pineapple fields. Pineapple fields were about two or three miles away from our place. We could go over there and get some pineapple and eat it at home. Of course, our firewood and other things were supplied to us by the plantation. At Makaha we didn't need to depend on people supplying us because all around [us] was the forest. By the way, in Makaha about two weeks after a big rain, [you'd find kikurage]. Do you know what kikurage is?

MK0: Yeah, you eat it, right?

MKI: Yes, it's a fungus. The fungus that grows on (dead) trees, on dried kukui trees and dried lantana trees. We could go out for about one hour and pick up a full bag of that. But we got sick and tired of eating that thing. Now days kikurage is a rarity and occasionally you can eat that at chop suey house. You know, the fresh kikurage and dried ones taste different.

MK0: I think I've had the dried one.

MKI: You tried one.

MKO: Yeah, the dried one. I notice that in Makaha you had a lot of wild things that you could get. There was quite a bit of freedom in that the boys could go out to the river and play. How about for your play activities in Waipahu? What were available to you?

MKI: We had very little time to play. We'd go to school very early in the morning. I attended Japanese[-language] school after English school got through at 2:00 [p.m.]. But Japanese school got started at 4:00 [p.m.] and it was 5:00 [p.m.] before school ended. By the time we went home, it was dark. So, we didn't have much time to play.

MKO: Life was really different for you in Waipahu as compared to Makaha.

MKI: I don't have too much [of] a good impression about Waipahu.

MKO: After you folks stayed in Waipahu for about . . .

MKI: Eighteen months.

MKO: You went to Palama and stayed there for three or four years. I was wondering, why did your family move to Palama?

MKI: My second oldest brother was in town and he told us to come out, so we came out. But life in Honolulu was (much) rougher than [in] Waipahu because [in] Honolulu you had nothing free. You understand that? Anything that you wanted, you had to buy. Whereas in Waipahu, at least some things you could get free. You could raise vegetables if you wanted [to], but in Palama, there is nothing that you can do.

MKO: But how about your housing in Palama? Where were you living?

MKI: We lived for about six months in a basement of a (Mr. Parker's house). One room apartment. We lived there for about six months and then moved to Pua Lane. That was at least two bedrooms, parlor, kitchen, (and bathroom). So, at least it was better than the one room apartment. From there I went to school. I started school, third grade and then when I was about sixth grade my brother bought a home in Rose Street, that was a five bedroom home. Old home, but adequate for us.

MKO: While you were living in Palama, what type of people lived in your neighborhood, and what did that area look like?

MKI: Oh, one side was known as Nishikiya Camp where there were quite a lot of boys that formed into real gangs. The main purpose of forming the gang was to play football, but they stuck together and fought together, too. And we were on this side; a Chinese owned our home and there were mostly Japanese people living there. There was one Korean who was a detective and one Chinese family living there.

(That whole area is now Mayor Wright Homes.)

MKO: What kind of activities did you have as a boy in Palama?

MKI: In Palama, here again, you know, if I tell you all of these things you may think I'm a bad boy, but people used to gang up against me and I had to fight my way through. One time one person started fighting with me so I fought back and pretty soon five boys ganged up on me. I got dirty licking. But that pretty soon straightened up and well, we got along all right.

MKO: You mentioned earlier that in the old days, you could go down Dillingham part, going to Iwilei area. Can you again tell me about that?

MKI: Yes, around there was the cane field, and beyond the cane field [were] railroads, and next to the railroad was the ocean. We used to go over there, buy old meat and get about a six-inch stick, tie string on that stick and tie old meat on the bottom and throw it all over the ocean. Every once in a while we would go with a net and scoop up the crab. We used to catch about a bag of crabs in a half day's time.

MKO: That was a lot, yeah?

MKI: A lot. Of course, those crabs were not the right type of crab. It was long Hawaiian (red) crab. I don't know what the right name for it is, but I don't see that in the market anymore.

MKO: You mentioned the cane field. What do you remember about that cane field and the extent of that area?

MKI: Cane field extended around Dillingham Boulevard up to the railroad track, and then up to King Street, you know where Kalihi Kai is now?

MKO: Is that near Kokea Street, Kokea and Kohou?

MKI: Yes, around there was all cane fields. Then around Halawa stadium and all of those places were cane fields.

MKO: All this was part of the Aiea Plantation?

MKI: Aiea, I don't know about that side but around Halawa stadium was Aiea Plantation.

MKO: I was wondering, since you were living in Palama, what did Palama town look like?

MKI: Palama town was a hick town. There was a community of Chinese people living Shafter side of our home--Shafter side of Pua Lane. On both sides nothing but Chinese people lived. At the corner of Pua and Kanoa Street, there was Saint Elizabeth Church. You remember that?

Those days the Palama boys used to form gangs; and how they started a fight was [that] they let a small child come and kick you in the shin like that so you slap 'em down and pretty soon half a dozen Hawaiian boys come. If you don't have a good explanation you get a good licking.

MK0: And boys of all different ethnic groups participated in these gangs?

MKI: Mostly Hawaiians and part-Hawaiians.

MK0: Did the gangs have names in those days?

MKI: Palama gang. (Auld Lane Gang.)

MK0: Did they ever venture out of their neighborhood and go to, say, Kakaako?

MKI: Oh, yes. They used to go to Moiliili and Kakaako and all those places to fight. Those days, policemen were not too swift, you know.

MK0: Were they ever involved in anything more serious than just fights among themselves?

MKI: No, I don't think so. There were no more murders or anything like that. The Palama boys, if you get to know them, were very nice to you. They'd protect you and when you're in trouble they come and help you. But when you're a stranger, that's what happen to you: they let little kids come and kick you in the shin and if you don't have any good explanation they beat the life out of you.

MK0: It was pretty rough then in Palama.

MKI: Pretty rough.

MK0: Later on, while you were still living in Palama, I was wondering what your father was doing.

MKI: Well, my father was in the country. He changed jobs. He never worked for anybody. He did all his work by himself. At the time that we were in Palama, he used to cut kiawe wood and ship it to Honolulu. They used to buy that kiawe wood and ship it (to Honolulu). They used to buy that kiawe wood, cut it, and ship it. He made some charcoal, too. But most of the wood was sold in town. In Honolulu there were whole lot of public baths, you remember those?

MK0: I've heard of ofuros on plantations, but I never heard of ofuros in town. How were they set up in town?

MKI: Well, in Palama there were two (Tamanoyu and Akinoyu). You buy a ticket, I think two-and-a-half cents for one bath. In homes you had tubs and things like that, but there was no facility for hot water, you see, so we used to go to the public bath and bathe.



MKO: You know, for two-and-a-half cents a bath, that was kind of a lot of money, right, in those days. How often could a family of eight go to a public bath?

MKI: Well, not all of us went at one time. But every other day we had to go.

MKO: In those days public baths were common in other parts of Honolulu?

MKI: Yes, yes.

MKO: Would you know about when these public baths went out of business?

MKI: Gee, I don't know. I moved away from Palama and I don't know when they discontinued that.

MKO: So later on you moved from Palama to the Rose Street area because your older brother bought a five bedroom house there. Can you describe that house and the area around it?

MKI: Yes. The house was a five bedroom house, an old house, of course, but it had a land area of 20,000 square feet and he bought it for \$5,000. Of course, [he purchased it] on mortgage and he had a hard time paying for the house and sending me to school, too.

MKO: You were saying that that particular brother was one of the first customs workers of Japanese ancestry?

MKI: Yes, he was the first Japanese customhouse worker. His name is Henry. In front of us there was Mr. Crabbe, Kaainoa, there was a haole, Shimas, and next to that was Andrade.

And to the left of us was Silva. He used to have a large piece of land. He had a large area, farm. Grapevines. You know Portuguese when they come from Portugal they always bring grapevines to make wine, eh. When the old man died, the children sold the place and they sold it for very cheap. One of the sons, Dr. Silva, a dentist, and the oldest daughter was a schoolteacher. And there was a pretty girl about my age that went to McKinley High School at the same time but we never knew each other.

(Laughter)

MKO: Oh, too bad, and how about your other neighbors?

MKI: In the back, there was a fellow by name of Kramer. On our right side there was a German family with three adults, two boys and one (sister). Gee, I forgot the name. In front of our place there was a big house and I used to wonder what the big house was. Later on I learned that that was a pineapple factory.

MK0: Pineapple factory over there?

MKI: They used to make candy out of pineapple. So, that street there from Middle Street to Shafter is zoned for business.

MK0: What were the other types of businesses in that particular area?

MKI: There was one store at the corner and that's all. But because of that pineapple factory, the whole street was considered a business district.

MK0: I notice that the names that you've mentioned included haole names, Hawaiian names, Portuguese names; you mentioned that the store was owned by Chinese, and your family is Japanese. How were the relations among all these people of different ethnic groups?

MKI: You know, we got along fairly well. We had no trouble at all. Next to the pineapple factory [were] the Kupaus. Walter Kupau, the labor leader now, well, his father was a colonel in the Army, Oliver Kupau, and he was a very smart man. He bought land all over the place so he owns practically the whole block over there. And the kids are lucky in that land value went up so much, no?

MK0: I remember that you said that the older Mr. Kupau gave you some advice. What was that advice?

MKI: I had bought a (bakery), you know; the building was for sale for \$45,000, and the rent for that place was \$400 a month. Well, I saw Mr. Kupau and told him, "Look I have an offer to buy this place for \$45,000 and the rent is \$400 a month. What do you think of it?"

He says, "Well, in ten years it'll pay up for itself, so go ahead and buy it."

I bought it, and I still have it yet.

MK0: Was it good advice?

MKI: Yes, it was good advice. Of course I gave all that property to my kids now and they have a property manager. They're getting about \$1,700 a month now from this.

MK0: It was very good advice to you from Mr. Kupau.

MKI: Yes, it was.

MK0: I was wondering if, for those times in Kalihi, if it was unusual to have such an ethnically mixed neighborhood?

MKI: Well, we were the newcomers and those other people were there before us, so I think maybe it was unusual for us to be there.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MK0: What do you remember most vividly about your childhood in that section?

MKI: Ah, you know the low cost housing on Linapuni Street?

MK0: Right.

MKI: Around there and the market, what is the name of the market now?

MK0: There's a Uyeshiro Market, and Middle Street Market.

MKI: No, no. On School Street.

MK0: Oh, P & P?

MKI: Yes. P & P was started by an Okinawan family. I forgot the name of the person, but around there was all taro patch. Above that and below that was all taro patch and way above that was piggery.

MK0: How about below your area of Rose Street?

MKI: Below my area was Fern School. [It] was just beginning to be built. [The] road was just two way pass. Two cars could barely pass through. The other side was Fort Shafter, of course, and every morning about six o'clock they used to shoot the cannon.

MK0: What contacts did you have with the military people living in that area?

MKI: Military people didn't used to live in there. They used to live in the barracks, so we had no contact with the military people.

MK0: You know, that Fern School area also has St. John Church and some residences around there. What do you remember about that section, if anything?

MKI: Ah, above [Fern] School was Fern Park. And above Fern Park, Mr. Fernandez used to live [there], Charlie Fernandez. Charlie Fernandez, I think he was a football player. There were quite a lot of football players living right around there but most of them went away to school. I think (Duffie Mendonca) was the only (one) that went to University of Hawaii.

MK0: As a boy did you participate in neighborhood sports?

MKI: Yeah, I used to play football with the boys over there, but I weighed only about 130 pounds then, so I warmed up the bench most of the time.

(Laughter)

MKO: Was there an official neighborhood team?

MKI: Yeah, the Thundering Herd.

MKO: Where was the practice field?

MKI: Practice field was just above the Kalihi [Union] Church and that was a rough, very ill-kept park, but that was our only park. Oh, but we had Fern Park, took, which was kept a little better, but it was a little too far for the other boys to go over there.

MKO: And, when you go down to the Kam IV Road area, what was in that vicinity as you approached King Street?

MKI: There was a Mitsuda Store, that sold hot lunches, a cafeteria, mostly cafeteria. Next door to that was a laundry, the Santos ran (that). Santo is Japanese, you know. On the Shafter side of Kam IV Road was a Chinese store, we used to call [the storekeeper] Chu-Kee but I don't know his second name.

And beyond that, Wakatsukis owned a barbershop. Mrs. [Sachi] Wakatsuki used to cut my hair. And, they had one daughter and two boys. A daughter married somebody. I don't know who. But the oldest son is a judge now, and the second son is a dentist. Mrs. Wakatsuki used to cut my hair. She was a very gentle woman, very nice and polite woman.

Below that was the [U.] Yamane Hardware Store. Mr. [U.] Yamane was a very smart man in that he bought whatever land that he could buy and those days the land was very cheap. But money was hard to get, too. There was a dairy run by an (Antone) Joseph. I think they moved to Waianae and Mr. [U.] Yamane bought that place, too, so he had the whole place for himself.

After the war, they [Yamanes] started developing the Kalihi Shopping Center. At one time they were having a pretty difficult time because the oldest son developed a shopping center in Pearl City and he had a hard time meeting expenses so he had to sell whole lot of land that the old man bought, to pay up for it. They are doing very well now, but at one time there were rumors that they may go broke, you know.

MKO: I was wondering, how about the business sections of Kalihi? I don't know how much familiarity you have of that area when you were growing up, but do you remember things about that area of Kalihi?

MKI: Around Kam IV Road those three or four were the only stores that were there. Oh, on the Kalihi side of Yamane Store there was the Honolulu Bonemeal Company [i.e., the Pacific Guano and Fertilizer Company] which is taken up by HC&D [Honolulu Construction & Draying] now. What else do you want to know?



MKO: Well, I want to go back to your own personal experience now. While you folks were living in the Rose Street area, Fern School was just coming up, so tell me about your school going at Kaiulani?

MKI: Oh, yes, since I started at Kaiulani School, I kept up with it. Of course, those days there was no such thing as intermediate school so I went until eighth grade, graduated eighth grade, and then went to McKinley High School.

MKO: While you were still going to Kaiulani were you, like other Japanese children, attending Japanese-language school?

MKI: Yes, after the English school I attended Japanese[-language] school. I attended Japanese school from kindergarten up to ninth grade.

MKO: What was the name of that?

MKI: Palama Dokuritsu Gakko.

MKO: Can you tell me something about that Japanese-language school? I haven't heard that much about Palama Dokuritsu Gakko, but I've heard of the Palama Gakuen, so I'm kind of curious.

MKI: Yeah, Palama Gakuen was the original Japanese school in Palama. I don't know the history of that but the principal rebelled and formed his own school [Palama Dokuritsu Gakko] on the end of Robello Lane. There were about three, four buildings there.

MKO: In those days, what was the teaching like in the Japanese-language school?

MKI: The first thing (we did every day was line up in front of school). Every day that we met the principal used to stand in front of us and make us repeat that we should become good American citizens: "Zenryō naru beikoku shimin to naru beshi." That's about all I remember. (Chuckles) The rest I don't remember.

MKO: That's very interesting. And this was pre-World War II, of course.

MKI: Pre-World War II.

MKO: While you were attending Kaiulani School, what do you remember about the students and the teachers at that school?

MKI: The teachers were very nice. There was a very tall Swedish teacher, she was so big that the kids used to call her Cyclop. Her name was Mrs. Lofton, I think, and she was a very good teacher, taught us whole lot of things. My first teacher [at Kaiulani], that was in third grade, was Mrs. Lynch. She had extensive arthritis of her hands so she couldn't write too well, but she, too, was very nice.

The year that I was in the third grade there was a flu epidemic in Hawaii and a whole lot of people died. I happened to catch the flu

and was absent from school for almost two weeks, and when I went back the teacher said, "Minoru! You came back! You are alive!" (Chuckles)

MK0: Oh, was that the same flu that occurred in other parts of the world at the same time?

MKI: Yes. I lost whole lot of my school friends, too, that time. Neighbors and oh, people were dying like flies.

MK0: With that occurring then, you know with people dying from the flu, what were your own feelings as a child seeing this happen and knowing that you had the flu, too?

MKI: I had the flu, too. I had no particular feeling about that. Those days there was no such thing as antibiotic and the doctor that came to see us was Dr. Tokuyama. From what I remember now, all he did was prescribe some aspirin for us.

MK0: Do you remember hearing about any home remedies that people practiced for the flu then?

MKI: They used to hang a camphor bag in their chest. That's supposedly to prevent the bacteria from getting into your respiratory tract.

MK0: What kinds of classes did you enjoy the most?

MKI: What subject?

MK0: What subject.

MKI: I enjoyed arithmetic, history and geography.

MK0: When you compared yourself with the other students, how well or how badly were you doing?

MKI: Eh. . . . I was (laughs) . . .

MK0: You were about average?

MKI: Uh huh. Average or little better than the average.

MK0: And, what type of activities after school do you remember participating in?

MKI: Well, we played football together, we played baseball. I don't know whether you know the game, "alavia," or not.

MK0: What is that?

MKI: (First, you choose two teams, five to ten people on a team. You fill up a Durham bag with sand and the team captain throws the ball

at people on the opposing team. That's the beginning of the war. The object is to hit as many of the opposing team while avoiding the oncoming ball.)

MKO: That was, what was it called?

MKI: Alavia.

MKO: Would you know what ethnic group brought that game in?

MKI: I think that was Hawaiian. [Editor cannot locate this term in the Hawaiian-language dictionary.]

MKO: Ah. A lot of the Hawaiian children were playing that game?

MKI: Yes, there were quite a lot of Hawaiians.

MKO: When you were going to Kaiulani, was there any sort of rivalry between Kaiulani and Kalihi-Waena, or any of the other schools?

MKI: Yes, we used to play football against them and well, there [was] friendly rivalry, but there was not enmity among each other.

MKO: Later on, after you finished at Kaiulani, you went to McKinley in 1929.

MKI: No. I graduated in 1929.

MKO: You graduated 1929, so you went to McKinley about 1925, and I was again wondering who were some of your classmates?

MKI: Masato Mitsuda; Ethel Mitsuda; Clarence Kusunoki, he died. Toyo Koizumi, you don't know him, he went to Japan. (Tom Fujiwara, James Lane, George Crowell, Harry Komuro, Harry Kojima.) Gee, funny how you forget.

(Laughter)

MKO: I remember you were talking about some days the late Governor John A. Burns used to give you a ride to school?

MKI: That was going to University [of Hawaii].

MKO: Oh. But he was going to McKinley at that time? You were saying that Governor Burns had a Chevrolet with no brakes?

MKI: Yeah, that was when we were going to University [of Hawaii].

MKO: And Governor Burns was living in the same . . .

MKI: Yes, Governor Burns was living in the Kupau house. From what I

gather, in the Kupau house, there was a Captain Larson in the police force and Governor Burns was living with them; so through him I think he got into the police force and he got to be a captain. Then he started running for politics.

MK0: And going back again to your McKinley High School days, how did you generally get transportation to McKinley High School in those days? It was quite a distance.

MKI: Yeah, we rode the rapid transit.

MK0: Was it a bus then or . . .

MKI: Streetcar.

MK0: Streetcar. What was the route back then, that streetcar?

MKI: Streetcar was from Fort Shafter up to Kaimuki.

MK0: So, you would get off near what is now King Street?

MKI: Yes. King and Middle Street. I would get on the streetcar there and get off at McKinley High School.

MK0: In those days what activities did you participate in at McKinley High School?

MKI: At McKinley High School I took part in ROTC and during my senior year I was captain of my (company. We hardly played any games except for intercompany football.)

MK0: What sort of things do you remember most vividly about your high school years?

MKI: My high school years, I know the girls used to tease me quite a bit.

(Laughter)

MKI: There was one group of girls that used to tease me about another girl that I didn't know anything about.

(Laughter)

MKI: But, I didn't pay any attention to them, so after a while they stopped teasing me.

MK0: I have this other question, I notice that you're one of the younger kids in the family.

MKI: I'm the fifth.

MK0: The fifth of six, yeah? I was wondering about your brothers and



sisters. Were they as fortunate as you to have gone through school?

MKI: No. Well, my younger brother is an artist now. He wanted to become an artist and he took up art. He's not doing too well (chuckles), but he's still at it. My older brothers had to go to work to send me to school.

MKO: The old Japanese style.

MKI: Yeah, uh huh.

MKO: I know that after that you decided to go to the University.

MKI: Uh huh.

MKO: And you attended the University [of Hawaii] for three years.

MKI: Three years, yes.

MKO: Can you kind of describe what you remember most vividly about the University [of Hawaii], the buildings, the professors there?

MKI: (Hawaii Hall, Gartley Hall, Farrington Hall, Dean Hall, the library, and the wooden buildings for engineering and agriculture were already there.) At the University I used to enjoy watching the University play football against Town Team and McKinley Alumni and St. Louis Alumni. Sometimes they won, sometimes they lost.

MKO: Who were the stars back then?

MKI: Ah, those days Johnny Wise, Hiram Kaakua. Funny how you forget all those names.

MKO: You know that Hiram Kaakua, wasn't he a Kalihi boy from your area?

MKI: I think so, yes. Norman Kauaihilo was a big star then. (Rusty Holt was also a star.)

MKO: Back then in those days, which professors do you remember the most?

MKI: Dr. Hamre and Dr. Bilger. (Mrs. Hormann, the German instructor; Mr. Fujimoto, the chemistry lab supervisor; Mr. Miyake, physics; and Mr. Ostergard, anatomy.)

MKO: I know Dr. Bilger. Was he a chemistry professor?

MKI: Uh huh [yes].

MKO: The other name I'm not familiar with. What did he teach?

MKI: He [Dr. Bilger] taught chemistry. Dr. Hamre taught biology, (histology, embryology) and anatomy.

MKO: What was your major?

MKI: My major was pre-medic.

MKO: I was wondering, why did you decide to become a doctor?

MKI: I decided to become a doctor because of the death of my younger brother. He was in an accident, and I went to see him at Queen's Hospital. He was just lying there, lying there until he passed away. So, I thought that maybe I can help people more, if I become a doctor, but I didn't become that good a doctor (chuckles).

MKO: You became a very good family practitioner in the Kalihi area. You also mentioned a story about Dr. Keller and . . .

MKI: Yes. Dr. Keller was the student advisor there. Well, I knew the financial situation of my family and I was doubtful whether I could go to medical school or not because money was tight then and I went to see him.

Now he says, "Young man, what do you want to become?"

I said, "Well, my ambition is to become a doctor, but I don't think I can afford it, so I'll take up sugar technology."

Then he told me, "Young man, if you take up sugar technology, you'll be without a job. If you have any ambition to become a doctor, go ahead and pursue that."

So I pursued that and middle of third year I applied to Tulane Medical School. Tulane accepted me so I went there. Dr. Fujiwara, Dr. Kimata, Dr. Tomoguchi in Hilo, and myself. Four of us left, and those days there was no such thing as airplane. Being from a poor family, we took steerage on SS McKinley and took us five-and-a-half days to reach San Francisco. We had passage to Los Angeles but we got tired of riding the boat so we got off at San Francisco and took the train to Los Angeles.

And you know, those days, was the depth of Depression. I was surprised the watermelon vendor used to have a big carload of watermelon, big watermelon like that, for fifteen cents apiece. Can you imagine that, fifteen cents apiece for that.

I asked Dr. Mitsuda, "Hey, let's buy one of those, fifteen cents, what have you to lose?"

He said, "Nah, there must be something wrong with that thing there."

We'd go in the store to get a piece about (one-fourth of the whole melon) for fifteen cents (laughs).

MKO: So, how did you manage to go to Tulane, though? You know, considering

the depression, family situation, how did you support yourself?

MKI: How did I support myself? I did not support myself. My brother supported me. He gave me enough for my tuition. Tuition was \$350 a year those days. And living condition, room and board for thirty-five dollars a month.

MKO: So, you went to Tulane. I was wondering, where was Tulane located?

MKI: Tulane is located in New Orleans.

MKO: When you got there to Tulane, it must have been very different from Hawaii. What were your . . .

MKI: Oh, I wanted to come right back home again. Of course, the train goes through the worst part of the town. The houses were all covered with soot and from the back step you see nothing but colored people sitting on the veranda. The weather was so hot that there's no such thing as air condition those days. Ah, because of that weather, I thought, gee, there's no place like Hawaii. I wanted to come back to Hawaii but once I made up my mind to go to that school I had to go through. And, Dr. Uyeno, you know Dr. Uyeno?

MKO: No.

MKI: Raymond Uyeno?

MKO: No.

MKI: He was there ahead of us. He met us at the depot and took us to the boarding house. We were fortunate they accepted us over there and the school was just a half a block from the boarding house so it was all right. But that winter, they say it was the coldest winter in twenty years.

MKO: Oh no.

MKI: Of course, we didn't have any snow, you know. But icicles all over the place. We got through that all right. Unlike University of Hawaii, we had to burn the midnight oil.

MKO: How did you find the medical study for you? Was it very, very difficult going through medical school?

MKI: Yes, you had to do quite a lot of studying. And a whole lot of memory work, eh. You read the text, for instance, anatomy, where does the muscle begin and where does it insert and what the action is, what the nerve supply is, what the blood supply is, and all that. You had to remember all that and every day you had a quiz.

MKO: You mentioned that four or five of you went together.

MKI: Four, four of us.

MK0: Four of you. Did this group of four people stick together through school, medical school?

MKI: They all graduated. Yes. Of course, I was the only one that went into general practice. Two of them went into eye, ear, nose and throat, one into hematology, I'm in general practice.

MK0: During your years there in medical school, what were your impressions of what you saw on the Mainland in terms of people's relationships?

MKI: What do you mean by that?

MK0: Like the first time you were on the Mainland with a lot of haole people, plus black people, what did you think about the Mainland?

MKI: Well, we were treated as whites. But the colored, no way. You meet the colored people coming from the opposite way, they sidetrack you and let you pass. You know, those days you never called a colored man [or woman], "Mister or Mrs.," you just called them by the first name. A technologist making slides and things like that was a very educated man, he knew a whole lot of things, but nobody called him, "Mister." His first name was Dino, and they called him Dino, that's all. That gave me a peculiar feeling at the beginning, you know.

MK0: It was kind of different from Hawaii.

MKI: Hawaii, everybody is equal. But over there, colored people, for instance on a streetcar, were only allowed to sit in the back part of the streetcar and white people in front. If a white man came on the streetcar, and no seat, a colored person had to evacuate and go stand up. In the theater, there was a colored section and a white section, and [in] restaurants, colored people were not allowed to go into white people's room.

We were fortunate in that we had a nice Japanese consul from Japan. Mr. Sato, by name; he used to take us go fishing and when he cannot go, he let his colored driver drive us around. One summer, they have a big lake over there, and we went swimming and so told, "Hey, Dan, come inside, swim."

"No, no sir, no sir," he said. If the white man catches me swimming with you fellas, I get lynched," he said.

You know that--I didn't feel so good about that.

MK0: Fortunately, because you're from Hawaii and you're Japanese, you were considered--treated more like white people?

MKI: Yes. The funny part of it was when I registered, it said colored and white. So I thought to myself, well, I'm not white, so I put



colored on. The registrar called me and said, "Mr. Kimura, what are you--a Negro?"

I said, "No, I'm not a Negro. I'm a Japanese."

"Well, you are white. Don't say you are colored."

We were treated like whites. We were accepted anyplace.

MK0: So you went to medical school there and graduated in . . .

MKI: Nineteen thirty-six.

MK0: Nineteen thirty-six--and what I am going to do is end the interview here and then next time, continue from your internship--Wichita, Kansas, and then go on to your practice in Ponca City, Oklahoma, and then on to your practice in Kalihi until 1978. So the next time I come here, we are . . .

MKI: All right.

MK0: I want to thank you for today's interview because I think this is the first time our office is learning about, say Japanese in New Orleans, and also, the Japanese growing up in Makaha.

(Laughter)

MK0: Anyway, I'll end the interview here and continue again.

MKI: Okay.

MK0: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 11-18-2-84 and 11-19-2-84

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Minoru Kimura (MKI)

January 9, 1984

Nuuanu, Oahu

BY: Michiko Kodama (MKO)

MKO: This is an interview with Dr. Minoru Kimura at his home in Nuuanu on January 9, 1984.

Okay. Looking at the record, you were an intern in Wichita, Kansas from 1936 to 1937. I was wondering, why did you choose to go to Wichita, Kansas?

MKI: Well, because, those days, it was hard to get [an] internship, you know. My records were not so bad. I stood about the fifteenth in a class of 130. Fellows way in the 60s and 70s got into Charity Hospital and lot of those places, but me, being a Japanese, they did not accept me. Some of the hospitals that I applied to didn't even answer my application. Like Charity Hospital didn't at all. Charity Hospital is a good hospital, you know. In those days, it used to be about a 3,000-bed hospital. Tulane controlled about 1,000 beds. So, there was ample space for Tulane graduates to be interned over there, but they didn't accept us. It was, of course, run by a Catholic charity, see? So, a fellow by name of Yasuda, who graduated one year ahead of me, went to Wichita, Kansas. By chance, I applied over there, and they accepted me. So, I went over there.

MKO: What was the name of the hospital?

MKI: Wichita Hospital.

MKO: When you were an intern there, what were your duties as an intern?

MKI: First of all, get up about six o'clock in the morning. At 7:30, you would be in the operating room, assist the surgeons. After that, make rounds. Take history and physical for all the new admittants, and give IV [intravenous] injections to patients.

There was one unpleasant situation there. By the way, there were only two interns over there. Myself and [a] Jewish doctor. The Jewish doctor had a hard time getting the needle in the vein, but I

used to be able to. By and large, the first shot I used to get 'em in. But one patient's husband saw me go in there, and said, "I don't want you."

So, I said, "Why? Why is that?"

"I don't want any Oriental come in my wife's room and treat her."

I said, "Okay. I shall go away."

The attending doctor came to apologize to me later on. He says, "Well, some people are that a way. You must excuse them for being that a way."

"Well, I don't care whether he doesn't want me to go into his wife's room. That's one work less for me," I told him. Well, that was that. Other than that, it was very pleasant over there.

MKO: When you were living in Wichita, Kansas, what did you think about the life there?

MKI: Life there, (chuckles) I didn't like it over there. Summers were hot. Hundred and ten [degrees] in the shade. Winters were very cold. The Spring and Autumn months were nice. But the people as a whole were nice, you know. The nurses treated us with respect. Work over there with the nurses was very good. They used to help us in preparing all the things for emergencies and all that. I think life was pretty good, but I didn't like the climate at all. (There used to be severe dust storms. That year we had one that made the sky dark.)

MKO: (Laughs) I guess coming from Hawaii. . . .

MKI: Well, New Orleans was cold, too, but the coldest New Orleans got was plus fifteen [degrees], while I was there anyway. And Wichita, I don't know what the temperature was, but the streets were all covered with snow. [Actually,] it usually didn't snow, it's sleet, you know. Just like grains of rice falling on the roof. And [it] made a lousy noise. But one morning, while I was assisting in the operating room, which was about nine thirty in the morning, it started snowing. This was in April. The snow was about this big (cotton ball snow), and it just kept floating down, and the sun was shining. It was beautiful. I wanted to go out there, but I was scrubbed up, so I couldn't do anything. By the time I got through with surgery, the snow was gone. That kind of snow, when it falls down, it disappears right away.

MKO: Gee, but in April.

MKI: April.

MKO: What a switch from Hawaii, yeah? And then, later on, you went to

Ponca City, Oklahoma from '37 to '39. And again, I'm wondering, why did you end up in Ponca City, Oklahoma?

MKI: Of course, this Wichita Hospital was run by Catholic nuns. The same order ran the Ponca City Hospital. And she (Mother Batiste) came out to Wichita to ask me if I wanted to go over there. I had applied to several places, one of which was in Texas. Texas didn't answer for a while. The Ponca City mother wanted me to come over as soon as I got through, so I promised them that I would go. Right after that, the [Texas] hospital, which was a big hospital, asked me to come. I asked one of the doctors, "Which one should I choose?"

He said, "Choose the Texas one."

I said, "But I made my promise to go to Ponca City."

He says, "To hell with the Ponca City. Go to the Texas hospital."

But once I make my promise, I want to keep my promise. I went over there. I liked it so much over there that I stayed for two years.

MKO: What did you like most about being in Ponca City?

MKI: People were very friendly. I assisted in every operation, and they let me operate on charity people. Well, if I went to a place like Charity Hospital in New Orleans, all cases were charity so every one, I would be operating. But over there, they let me operate on charity cases. And the doctors were very nice. They asked me to stay another year, so I said, "Okay, then. I'll stay another year, provided you would give me more work to do." Not in the sense [of] taking history and physical and doing emergency work. I want to do some surgery in surgery. They said, "Well, we'll let you do that."

Actually, they didn't give me too much to do the second year. My father got sick, so I came back [to Hawaii] for about two months. Stayed for two months and went back. After the second year, my mother got sick. So, I said, "I'm going to go home." Came back and I treated my mother. I treated my father, too. Both of them had cancer. My father had cancer of the esophagus. My mother had cancer of the rectum. Those days, the surgeons were not so good. There were no chest surgeons over here. So, my dad actually starved to death. All I did was give him intravenous fluid. I couldn't even pass a stomach tube into his stomach.

My mother, she believed in patent medicine. She used to apply patent medicine and all that. The doctor that I took 'em to, he didn't want to do any surgery. He gave some X-ray treatment. But X-ray treatment, those days, wasn't good. In fact, it did more harm than good, because it caused strictures over there. Toward the



end, she couldn't eliminate her feces. She lived for about one year after I came back. No, more than one year. Because for about six months after I came back, I did not open my office. She died exactly one year after I opened my office.

MKO: If your parents had not taken sick, would you have liked to have stayed in the Mainland?

MKI: I would have liked to go to a bigger hospital and do some residency work. But my parents were sick. I come from [a] poor family, and I couldn't afford to stay away too long.

MKO: I was wondering, why is it that you never came back earlier to work in, say, Kuakini or any of the local hospitals at that time?

MKI: Well, at that time, [at] Kuakini, the work that they did over there wasn't too good. The interns just helped the surgeons, and they didn't get any work to do. I applied over there [Queen's] first, but they rejected me. [That was] the first time, after I graduated. So, I didn't apply over there. [But, later,] I worked at St. Francis Hospital for a while. They made me teach the interns over there. I did that for about four years, and my practice became busy, so I quit that.

MKO: So, when you compared Honolulu hospitals--maybe, specifically, Kuakini with Mainland hospitals--for training facilities, it was better to go to the Mainland?

MKI: Yes. Mm hmm, mm hmm.

MKO: Then, when you came back to Kalihi in 1939, what did Kalihi look like? You had been away for quite a while. Were there any changes?

MKI: Kalihi didn't show much change after I came back. I stayed away for about seven years. There was the Kalihi Theater--I'm describing around my office [area]. There was the Kalihi Theater, and next door to that there were three cottages. In the middle cottage, your uncle [Dr. Kodama] used to practice over there. But pretty soon, a Chinese man--Kam Tai Lee--leased the whole thing over there. And he built this building over there. That concrete [building] next to the Salvation Army now. That's Kam Tai Lee's building. That was built after I started practicing. The buildings on the other side--Yamamoto Building, Itoga Building, and the rest, I don't know. I think Yamane owned a whole lot of property over there. That [U.] Yamane Store was still there yet. In front of [U.] Yamane Store was Mitsuda's Delicatessen. Next to that was Santos'. Santo is Japanese, you know. (Chuckles)

MKO: What business were they in?

MKI: They were in laundry. And Shafter side of Kam IV Road, there was a Chinese grocery store. His first name was Chu Kee, but I don't know

the [family name]. . . . Chu Kee Chun, maybe. They used to run that place. And next to that building was that Wakatsuki Barbershop. I think next to that building, the Yamanes used to live. They had a fairly large cottage over there. They used to live over there and go to the (store). . . . [The U.] Yamane Store was (on the makai side of his house). Next to Yamane's store, that was the Pacific Fertilizer and Guano Company. That was a pretty large area that they occupied. I don't know why they discontinued that. They discontinued that, and the cement company--HC&D [Honolulu Construction & Draying]--bought that place and built their ready-mix cement company. Behind of Yamane's store was owned by Antone Joseph. Antone Joseph used to run a dairy. This is on the makai side, there were whole lot of cottages. I don't know who owned that, but there were all kinds of people living around there--Japanese, Portuguese, Hawaiian, and all that. On the opposite side, there's a church over there now. Kalihi Union Church. Behind there was a park where the Thundering Herd used to practice.

MKO: Then, as you go along King Street, say, past Kalihi Union Church on the mauka side?

MKI: On the mauka side, at the corner of Gulick and King, there was a service station run by a Mr. Iwasa. His daughter went to Japan, medical school, and became a doctor. She interned at Kuakini Hospital. So, that's the reason why I know that she was a doctor. Mr. and Mrs. Iwasa used to run that service station from early in the morning to late in the night. Those days, there weren't too many robbers, so it was quite safe for them to run that.

In front of that Iwasa Service Station was a Chinese store run by a Mr. Lum. Beside that there was--where the International Savings and Loan [is now]-tile building in which, at first, Dr. Ching practiced. He died of leukemia when he was about thirty-six years old. Then, there was a dentist (practicing) over there. I don't know who the dentist was. Then, there were whole lot of old cottages over there. Dr. Fujita--I took him in as a partner--bought part of that place. He and Lum got together and leased that place to Mr. Horita, who built that building [that still stands today]. By the way, Mr. Iwasa owned that property opposite that service station. That service station area was bought by a Chinese man by the name of Ching--Mr. Eddie Ching. He ran a small superette over there. Well, his wife died. He had about three or four children. But he went to Hong Kong and got married to a young wife, and I think he leased that place to. . . . There's a chop suey store over there now.

MKO: Mm hmm. There's a Lung Fung . . .

MKI: Lung Fung, yeah.

MKO: . . . Chop Suey, right? And Kalihi Super Meats right next to it.

MKI: That makai side of King Street, the Itoga and Yamamoto building, they have not changed since I knew that place. They're still there yet. They're old buildings, but substantial buildings.

MKO: Was the original owner of the Yamamoto Building also a dentist?

MKI: No, no. Yamamoto is, I think, related to Dr. Sakimoto. I think Dr. Yamamoto at Kalihi, father and son running that dentist office, they're cousins to Dr. Sakimoto.

MKO: And it was originally the older Dr. Yamamoto's father who built the building?

MKI: No, the father of the doctor built the building. They must have built that place for pretty cheap, because when I built my building--that was in 1960--the building cost me only \$125,000. My building is solid concrete building. The other side is hollow tile building. So, hollow tile building, naturally, takes less time to build than reinforced concrete building. So it must have been built quite cheaply, but they were smart enough to build at that time.

MKO: And they're still there.

MKI: Yeah, they are still there.

MKO: The Yamamoto and the Itoga Building.

MKI: Yeah, uh huh. Itoga Building, I don't know whether the Itogas still own that place or not. Itoga's daughter was married to. . . . Oh, I forgot his name, now. Anyway, Itoga's daughter's husband was running that place, a small grocery store.

MKO: I think he just recently passed away, maybe a year ago.

MKI: Oh, what was his name now?

MKO: I can't remember the name either, but it is the Itoga's daughter who still runs the store, and her husband just passed away.

MKI: Oh, Mori-something. Morimoto or. . . .

MKO: I can't remember either, but I was told that was the case. So, that was what Kalihi looked like?

MKI: Yes. And Kalihi Theater was still running. The Muraoka Store was just a little wooden cottage. It was more or less a pharmacy, but they sold everything. He made money, and in 1940, built a big two-story building over there. At that time, I was practicing in front of Muraoka Building, upstairs. And downstairs were a barbershop and cleaning shop. I used to go down there to have my hair cut. That barber used to point down over there [Muraoka Building], "Chee, that damn fool. He's going to lose all his money." But, no, it

turned the opposite way. (Chuckles)

MKO: Oh, do you remember the barber's name and the cleaner's name?

MKI: Cleaner's name was Fukunaga. The barber's name. . . . Chee, I forgot his name. And there was a saimin stand at the corner.

MKO: Oh, you mean, right next to your building?

MKI: Right below my building.

MKO: Right below your building. What is now the Green Light [Inn] . . .

MKI: Yes. Green Light, yes. That changed hands once.

MKO: I heard that there was a taxi stand somewhere along King Street?

MKI: Yes, there's a taxi stand Kalihi side of the Kam Building. In between, there's a Chinese family who owned a cottage. I think the name is Chong. I'm not too sure about that. Beyond the taxi stand was Furtado's Bar. Beyond that there was a two-story building. I don't know who owned that, but that had a basement, a first floor, and a second floor. On the second floor--you want me to tell you who were over there?

MKO: Mm hmm [yes].

MKI: Dr. Suga was one of the dentists over there. Dr. Yamagata, another dentist over there. Dr. Yamagata died of kidney trouble. Dr. Suga is presently practicing in my building. Let's see, there were some others, but I didn't know them. And then, below, there was a pet shop. A Kalihi boy ran for [the State legislature] . . .

MKO: [Richard] Garcia?

MKI: Garcia, yes. Garcia's mother ran (a pet shop.) Beyond that, that was the Foremost Dairy.

MKO: Somewhere along the route, I think there was also a dress shop?

MKI: Oh, dress shop, yes. Dress shop was within that building there, that three-story building.

MKO: The one with Dr. Suga?

MKI: Yes.

MKO: How about as you go towards the Kalihi Fire Station?

MKI: Kalihi Fire Station. That area, at the corner, there was a Chinese store, who got evicted. Now a Filipino family is running that place. Beyond that was a Muraoka Service Station, not connected



with that other Muraoka. Beyond that, there's an old building which belonged to a Portuguese family (Barboza), who sold that place for about \$9,000 to Muraoka. That had about 10,000 square feet and a three bedroom house.

MK0: In that vicinity, there's also the Prendergasts?

MKI: Yeah. Prendergast's is beyond that. Next to that place is Prendergast. Prendergast, there are two sisters, unmarried. I don't know too much about them, except that I removed a cancer from one of the sisters' arms before they went on the world tour. And beyond that is the fire station. Beyond that, that Kalihi noodle shop now. They used to have a cleaning shop and barbershop over there, but it is a . . .

MK0: Noodle shop now?

MKI: Noodle shop now. Then, the corner store, I don't know what they sold over there. There was a Spanish type building over there. Now it's a Kentucky Fried Chicken.

(Laughter)

MK0: By 1939, when you opened your practice in the same building with Dr. Hayashi, Farrington [High School] was already standing there?

MKI: Oh, yes. The Kam Housing was already there.

MK0: Do you remember what was beyond that area? Beyond Farrington and the housing?

MKI: Beyond that there was a small restaurant run by a person by the name of Mr. Gibo. Just beyond that is the Liberty Bakery. Beyond Liberty Bakery, there was an auto repair shop. And beyond that, it was an empty land which somebody bought and built that three- or four-story building over there.

MK0: You hit the Houghtailing, Waiakamilo area?

MKI: Houghtailing [Street], yes. And then, [Board of Water Supply] pumping station. Above that there was [an] auto top repair shop, a chop suey house, and some other stores. But I didn't pay much attention. Oh, at the corner of Houghtailing and King there was a service station. I think, beyond the chop suey house, there was a two story building. Old building. There was a flower shop, there was a small grocery shop, and a barbershop. Upstairs was a house of ill fame. (Laughs)

MK0: Really? Oh, I didn't know they were outside of the Downtown area.

MKI: Yes, they were.

MK0: Do you remember if that house had a name?

MKI: No, I don't remember.

MKO: Oh, that's interesting. That was back in 1939 you remember it being there?

MKI: Yes, mm hmm.

MKO: When you opened up your practice in 1939, that was the same building with Dr. Hayashi. Can you explain how that came about?

MKI: I was looking around for a place to practice, and I visited Dr. Hayashi. He said, "Say, why don't you open up over here in Kalihi? There's no doctors over here."

But I said, "Where can I practice? I cannot find any space around here."

He said, "There's an empty space back there."

You know, always it's better to practice in the front than in the back. In the back, unless you have a neon sign or something like that, you cannot put a notice that will attract people. I put a small sign over there. About six years later, people used to come to Hayashi's place and look at my sign and say, "Hey, there's an M.D. over here."

(Laughter)

MKO: So, you were in the back part of the building and Dr. Hayashi . . .

MKI: Was in the front, facing King Street.

MKO: And he's a dentist.

MKI: Dentist.

MKO: When you first opened, how was it for you? In terms of the business part . . .

MKI: My business was very poor. The first month, I grossed forty dollars.

(Laughter)

MKI: But my practice grew fairly rapidly. By the second year, I was grossing about thousand dollars a month.

MKO: More patients came?

MKI: Yes, mm hmm. Then, when the war [World War II] came, there was the typhoid injection campaign, which you charge one dollar for one shot. They had to have three shots. People used to line up the

stairs to come up for injections because my office was very small. With that typhoid campaign, the most important thing was that people began to know that I was there. Then, my practice went way up.

MKO: In those early days, say, the late 1930s, early '40s, what kind of clientele did you have?

MKI: I had all kinds. I had Puerto Rican, Japanese, Portuguese, Hawaiian, Chinese. I had Korean, too.

MKO: Where did your clientele generally come from?

MKI: Generally from--when I first began practicing--around Kalihi.

MKO: What is now the business area?

MKI: Yes, uh huh.

MKO: Did people up from the valley or down from Kalihi Kai also come in?

MKI: Yes, mm hmm.

MKO: At that time, about how many doctors were practicing in that Kalihi area?

MKI: M.D.?

MKO: Uh huh [yes].

MKI: I was the only one.

MKO: In those days, I was wondering how working conditions were for a doctor?

MKI: What do you mean?

MKO: Hours . . .

MKI: If we had patient in the hospital, we used to go to the hospital at seven o'clock. By eight o'clock, we'd be in the office. Twelve o'clock, we take off--if we didn't have any patients--and went to lunch. And from one thirty [or] two o'clock to about five o'clock [we'd be in the office]. Then, we went to the hospital to make rounds, come back, have supper. Then, we used to go to the office supposedly for one hour, but I never got home until about eleven o'clock at night.

MKO: You mean, patients would come?

MKI: Yes. Well, [before] the typhoid campaign. Because after the [outbreak of] war, nighttime, you couldn't practice. As I said, my practice grew pretty rapidly. I became pretty busy before the war.

MK0: Before the war, were you still making house calls back then?

MKI: Yes, I was making house calls before the war, during the war, and after the war. Making house calls at night during the war was a dangerous thing, because the military allowed us light about this wide (one centimeter by three centimeters) . . .

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MK0: You were saying that during World War II with the blackout restrictions and driving restrictions on the headlights, it was dangerous to do . . .

MKI: Dangerous to do that [house calls]. I almost got killed one time making a home call to a severe asthmatic. The non-citizen doctors could not go out at night. They used to call me to please make the home call, so I used to make the home call. On School and Notley [Streets], I was going up School and was going to turn to Notley. Just as I passed School Street, the military car came rushing right behind of me. If I was, oh, about five, six seconds late, I would have been crashed. I went over there, I relieved the patient, and told him, "Gee, making night call is very dangerous. So, next time, call the emergency and have them come and pick you up and be treated. Because I almost got killed today."

But then, I used to make home calls. You know, doctors like Takaki, and Okazaki, Shinkawa, Matsuyama, and those fellows, they were born in Japan so they couldn't go out at night. They used to call me and say, "Will you please make this home call?" So, during the blackout days, I never was home before ten o'clock at night. I come home, go out, come home, go out. (Chuckles)

MK0: You know, that incident you mentioned, that occurred near the Fort Shafter area, right?

MKI: Near the Fort Shafter, yeah.

MK0: At that time, your family--at least, your brother's family--was still living in that area. What have you heard about conditions there during the wartime? They were so close to a military area.

MKI: The military didn't disturb them at all. As long as you obeyed the law, kept the blackout condition good, they didn't disturb you at all.

MK0: So, no problems?

MKI: No problem at all.



MK0: And then, during the war years, you told me that you worked at a first-aid station in Kalihi. Can you describe how that was started and what happened . . .

MKI: Yes. Well, the Hawaii Medical Association was getting ready for this war. They called us in one time and made us chiefs of certain districts. Since I was in Kalihi, I was the instructor in Kalihi. Several doctors were assigned to me, but they never did show up. So, (chuckles) it was my sole responsibility to teach those people first aid. We started at Kalihi-Waena School. Kalihi-Waena was not too satisfactory, so we moved to Farrington High School. As soon as the war started and casualties start coming in, they had to move out the convalescent patients to some other place, so they converted Farrington High School into a convalescent hospital. Military hospital. So, we had to move out to that. . . . I forgot the name again. That school in front of the Kalihi Shopping Center?

MK0: Oh, Kapalama School?

MKI: Kapalama School.

MK0: In front of the Kamehameha Shopping Center?

MKI: Yes.

MK0: At what year was that, that you had to move the first aid station from Farrington to Kapalama?

MKI: That was '42.

MK0: During the war years, as a doctor, what were you doing?

MKI: I visited the first aid station every morning and every afternoon. At first, I was spending most of my time there. And they used to pay us \$260 a month. Dr. Arnold was the chief of the first aid station. So, I told him, "Look, I can't make a living on \$260 a month. So, I want to quit there and do my practice."

He says, "Kimura, don't be a damn fool. Two hundred and sixty dollars is [a] drop in the ocean to the nation. Take 'em, go over there and say hello, good-bye, hello, good-bye."

So, I said, "Okay, if that's the case, (chuckles) I'll do that."

Well, I spent some time, about one hour, with the people. But we had nothing to do. You know, occasionally, a fellow with a boil or something like that comes in, and you lance the boil. That's the end of it. They go back to their own doctor, eh?

MK0: So, you concentrated on your practice during the war years?

MKI: Yes, uh huh.

MKO: Because it was martial law during the war, were there any types of restrictions besides the non-citizen doctor restriction during the war?

MKI: No, no. We could go to any hospital to operate, provided you were qualified to operate. But you could admit patients to any hospital. There were no restrictions.

MKO: Then for the Kalihi district itself, what kind of wartime measures were taken in the district, say, organizing of areas or . . .

MKI: The people appointed themselves the chief of the block. Then, they used to walk around monitoring the lights--which is a silly thing, you know. A small light showing like that, they cannot see from the sky. They used to go over there and bawl them out. I remember a person by the name of Mrs. Enos, who lived right next to me. A fellow by the name of Nobriga was the chief of the block. He went to Mrs. Enos' place and told them, "Your light is showing."

Mrs. Enos says, "Mr. Nobriga, you mind your own business! Don't come around here and tell me what to do!" (Laughs)

But that chief of the block and all that, that soon died away. The thing that the military monitored most was the short-wave radio. They didn't want the people from over here hear propaganda from Japan. Any device that interfered with the radio reception was taken away, never to be returned again. You know, those things, at that time, used to cost about \$500. I had a diathermy machine. Cost me \$500. That was plenty money to me at that time. They took 'em away and I never did see 'em come back again.

MKO: How about rationing in that area? Rationing and the selling of war bonds?

MKI: Gasoline was rationed. Food wasn't rationed. I think gasoline and. . . .

MKO: Alcohol?

MKI: Yes, alcohol. You know, funny thing. When anything is rationed, whether you use that or not, you buy that, you know. I used to see people line up every month to buy any kind of liquor, whether it's wine, or whiskey, or brandy. They used to line up to buy. Occasionally, I used to line up (chuckles) to buy those things. I don't drink, but my brothers drank, so I bought for them. But those things were kind of foolish. One remark that I heard from people was that, "Gee, in Honolulu, you go to line up for anything. You got to line up for liquor. You got to line up for doctor. You got to line up for house of ill fame." (Laughs)

MKO: Right, during those days, right?

MKI: You know, when the fleet comes in, the house of ill fame, they had long line waiting. (Chuckles)

MKO: Was that the same situation with the one on King Street in Kalihi?

MKI: No. That place wasn't too popular. I guess the women over there were not too good-looking, (laughs) I suppose.

MKO: Let's see, you practiced during the war. And then, after the war, you bought a cottage on Self Lane.

MKI: Oh, you mean. . . . No, that was on King Street. That place was known as the Garden Tract. Most of the houses over there were owned by Portuguese people. I bought the cottage from Mrs. Nunes. Next door, the people died, and they willed the place to the niece. So, the niece sold that place to me. When I got that two properties, I built a new building.

MKO: You built your new building in 1960?

MKI: Nineteen sixty, yeah.

MKO: But before that, you practiced in the cottage that you bought?

MKI: Yes. Three-bedroom cottage.

MKO: At that time, can you describe the costs of opening up a practice in that cottage and the space that you had?

MKI: Well, my brother was a carpenter. He remodeled the place for me. So, it didn't cost me. (Chuckles) Well, it may have cost him money, but it didn't cost me anything. Then, funny thing, when I moved over there, I had little parking space for about seven cars. And my practice increased to triple. When I built a new building, again, my practice increased a whole lot. But by that time, I had to have some help because I couldn't handle everything.

MKO: So, by 1960, you built the new building. And 1961, you moved in. You just mentioned that you needed some new help. What kind of help did you have to bring in?

MKI: I used to deliver quite a lot of babies, you see. For two years I delivered more babies than any other doctor at Kuakini Hospital. I used to take most of my patients to Kuakini, some to St. Francis, because they were near, you see. For two years at the end of the year--Mr. [Kenji] Goto was the chief over there then--he told me, "You know, Kimura, you delivered more patients than any other doctor in this hospital?"

I said, "Ah, go on."

But he said, "Yeah, that's true."

Then, I took in a fellow by name of Fujita. He was a Kauai boy, and Dr. Yamamoto, who is a Kauai boy too, a good friend of mine. So, he asked me to help him. So, I took him in.

MKO: But later on, you separated?

MKI: Yes.

MKO: By the 1960s, your practice had grown and a lot of babies had been born, too--I guess, part of the post-war baby boom?

MKI: Yes. Dr. Fujita was an obstetrician, so I gave all my ob. [obstetric] and gynecology cases to him.

MKO: I was wondering, by 1961, had that Kalihi area again gone through any changes? Any major changes?

MKI: Yes. Mr. Muraoka. . . . You know, that place was mostly owned by Portuguese people. He bought the lot next to Mr. Shigemi. And he bought that old Star Theater, and he built that building. Then, Bishop Bank moved in over there. They did good business, but they didn't have enough parking space. So, they were asking them to get more parking space. Eventually, they got parking space, but by that time, Bishop Bank moved to opposite the Kalihi Shopping Center.

MKO: Kam IV Road and King Street, right?

MKI: Mm hmm [yes]. Then, the American Savings and Loan moved in over there [near Muraoka's].

MKO: Then, across the street, Dr. Hayashi still practices?

MKI: Yes, mm hmm.

MKO: In the original building. And at that time, what were the businesses below Dr. Hayashi?

MKI: Below Dr. Hayashi was the barbershop and the cleaning shop.

MKO: When did Mr. [Tad] Iwanuma [and his appliance store] start?

MKI: Mr. Iwanuma moved in. . . . Chee, I don't know what year he moved in. He took over two places--that laundry and the barbershop. There's a Filipino travel service over there. I don't know who had it over there. I think--oh, there was a clothing shop.

MKO: In that same building?

MKI: Yes, uh huh. The clothing shop. A clothing shop around there wasn't too good. There were three clothing shops over there. You know, women's clothing. One was by the present Kalihi Theater, I think. And one was in that. . . .



MKO: Dr. Suga's building?

MKI: Yes, uh huh.

MKO: One was called Vimi's?

MKI: Vimi's. Yes, mm hmm.

MKO: I've heard of another called Carol's?

MKI: Yes, mm hmm. Carol was on the below side. I don't know what the other one was.

MKO: And then, say that we're traveling from your medical building and we're going down the street. We pass Muraoka. And as we proceed down the street, what did it look like in the 1960s?

MKI: Going which way?

MKO: Going towards the . . .

MKI: To Fort Shafter?

MKO: . . . Yamane area. Going towards Fort Shafter area.

MKI: There was a barbershop. There was a restaurant run by a person by the name of Iinuma. Recently she died. That place was taken over by a restaurant by the name of Kotobuki. And Kotobuki moved over to Kapahulu side.

MKO: Now, I think it's a pawnshop or secondhand store, [at the former site of Kotobuki Restaurant]. And then, so, after you go past that, then. . . .

MKI: Then, the Kalihi Theater. Kalihi Theater is Salvation Army now. Beyond that used to be three cottages, one of which your uncle used to practice. That, Kam Tai Lee leased that place and built that two-story building.

MKO: And was there a photographer in that building?

MKI: Yes. By the name of Kimura.

MKO: They had a photographer. And then some kind of business next to him?

MKI: Carol's was in that building.

MKO: Oh, okay. Now I know where Carol's was.

MKI: Carol's was on the Waikiki end, and Kimura was in the center. And the other side was a savings and loan.

MKO: Oh. Beneficial Finance?

MKI: Yes, that's right.

MKO: Then, as you walk down the street, you have the Yamamoto Building?

MKI: Yeah, there's a service station now.

MKO: Service station, Yamamoto . . .

MKI: And then, Yamamoto Building. And Itoga Building.

MKO: And across the street. . . .

MKI: Across the street, at the corner, Iwasa owned that building. No, Iwasa owned the empty property. Behind that empty property is a beer joint. Hollow tile beer joint. I don't know what the name of it is. And this side of it, there were whole lot of small buildings, but I don't know.

MKO: When I was going to school, Kalakaua, in the late 1960s, we would have to walk along King Street. And there used to be many pool halls.

MKI: Yes, pool halls.

MKO: Then, as we go past Gulick Avenue towards the Yamane area, by 1960s there was the shopping center. Kalihi Shopping Center?

MKI: Kalihi Shopping Center, yes.

MKO: How about across the street?

MKI: Across the street, the buildings were all torn down, and the First National Bank took over the place. Beyond that, there was a restaurant which was never successful. Always went broke.

MKO: King's Inn? Was it called King's Inn?

MKI: I don't know what it was. (Chuckles)

MKO: That's the one on the corner on King Street. As you come off of that little bridge that goes over the freeway?

MKI: Yes. Uh huh.

MKO: Now that I've mentioned the freeway, how, in your opinion, did the Moanalua Freeway affect the Kalihi business in the area?

MKI: That affected it very, very badly. Before that, from Kam IV Road up, people used to come down and buy at [U.] Yamane Store and go home. But when that Kam IV Road was closed up, they had to make a

roundabout way. So, fellows who lived in Kalihi Uka, for instance, or Kam IV Road, they might as well go to the Kapalama Shopping Center.

MKO: You mean, the Kamehameha one?

MKI: Yes. Kamehameha Shopping Center.

MKO: How did it affect the businesses, say, in your part of town? Did it affect it any way?

MKI: Well, you know, for a long time, I was the only one there, so I was kept busy all the time. Of course, Dr. Mirikitani--Carl Mirikitani--was an internist at that time, and Dr. Jun Kusunoki. They opened their office in the Muraoka Building, upstairs. But somehow or other, they didn't click with the patients. I think one of the reasons why didn't click was that both of them didn't speak Japanese at all. They didn't know Japanese. To describe an illness, for instance in an old Japanese man, you have to be able to describe it accurately. But they didn't know Japanese, so they didn't know how to describe it.

MKO: So, during the times that you practiced in Kalihi--you practiced up till 1978. Say, back in 1960 when you first built your new building, was your clientele largely Japanese issei?

MKI: No, no. I had whole lot of Japanese patients, but I had Puerto Ricans, and Portuguese, and Hawaiian. They were all good people.

MKO: But it was still important for you to know the Japanese language to work with your issei patients?

MKI: Yes, you had to know the Japanese language because the old folks, it's hard to explain them in English. If you explain (to) them in English, they didn't understand you. They just didn't understand you.

MKO: And then, say, after 1960, did you notice sort of change in your clientele?

MKI: Well, I treated mostly internal medicine cases. Because I had a pediatrician, I had a surgeon. I had two ob. men. And I had one internist. But the old people, somehow, wanted to see me. So, all surgical cases, I referred to the surgeon. Ob. and gyn. [gynecology] case, I referred to the ob.-gyn people.

MKO: So, at about what year did your practice become a clinic? You mentioned all these specialists.

MKI: Since 1961, Dr. Fujita came in. And then, he brought in Dr. Saiki, who is a ob.-gyn. person, too. And then, my nephew by marriage, Dr. Nishi, is a surgeon. And Dr. Kuboyama, who is a pediatrician.

And Dr. Kaneshiro, who is an internal medicine man, and myself.

MKO: So, that really became a clinic, then, providing a variety of services?

MKI: Mm hmm. About nineteen seventy-one or -two, those people got together and built their own building by Gulick and King.

MKO: So, that's the . . .

MKI: That's the Kalihi Medical Center now.

MKO: That's the makai corner, yeah?

MKI: Makai corner, yeah.

MKO: So, that's one of the changes you've noticed in the '70s in that Kalihi area. Have you noticed any other changes, say, by the time you retired in 1978 in the Kalihi area?

MKI: That 7-Eleven store, that came after I retired. That place used to be a service station. Before that, Portuguese people lived there. Well, they sold it to the . . . No, I think they leased it to the service station people. And the 7-Eleven, I don't know whether they bought that place or leased that place. I think they leased the place. (Horita Building was built about 1962 or '63. Before that there was a service station and a restaurant there called the Purple Inn.)

MKO: You know, from what you've been telling me, it seems as though there were quite a few Portuguese families who once lived directly on King Street, but through the years, they either leased or sold their holdings?

MKI: Yes, mm hmm. I think, around my area, was practically all Portuguese people.

MKO: How about the lanes in the back of your area?

MKI: In the lane in the back, there was one Japanese, Suzuki. And then, Furtado. No, Enos, Furtado, and Enos. And then, on the opposite side, there was Enos again. And then, DeCastro. One odd one-- MacKenzie. (Chuckles) And Nobriga. The place that I bought from was a DeMello. DeMello and Nunes.

MKO: Did you ever in the past discuss with any of the Portuguese families how they got the land?

MKI: No, I did not. They moved away, and I lost contact of them.

MKO: And then, you retired in 1978. But your son Richard joined in 1976.



MKI: Yes. Seventy-six, yeah.

MKO: So, your family is still active in the medical field in Kalihi?

MKI: Yes.

MKO: You know, as you look back at all the years you've lived in Kalihi from the time you were a little boy to the time you finished your practice in Kalihi . . .

MKI: No, I lived over here [Nuuanu] and went in.

MKO: That's right. You moved up to Nuuanu, yeah? Well, based on your knowledge of Kalihi from the time you were a little boy to the time you retired from your practice in '78, what do you consider the greatest change in Kalihi that you've witnessed?

MKI: Greatest change, I think, is the Kalihi Shopping Center. The Kalihi [Union] Church. And there's a furniture store. Gee. . . .

MKO: Oh, Pacific Furniture Store?

MKI: Pacific Furniture Store. That American Security Bank Building, that Kalihi Medical Building, and my building. And the Kalihi Queen Supermarket. And that Upside Down Auto Parts, that's owned by Muraoka. The 7-Eleven (and Central Pacific Bank building owned by Herbert Horita).

MKO: What are you feelings about these developments that have come up, say, within the last twenty, thirty years?

MKI: How do you mean by that?

MKO: Your thoughts on the growth of Kalihi?

MKI: Is it good or bad? I think it's for the good. When I first started practicing over there, about every ten minutes a car used to pass either Kalihi way or Downtown way. And you used to be able to park your car right in front of your office all day, and nobody squawked. But now days, you can't do that. You have to have parking space to do any business now days.

MKO: Although you were born elsewhere, you spent much of your boyhood in Kalihi. As a Kalihi boy, what are your thoughts on Kalihi as a home?

MKI: Oh, there are better places to live in. (Chuckles) The place that I lived in on Rose Street, that place, whole lot of apartments came up. There are whole lot of drunkards around there. It's not a good place to live in now.

MKO: How about in the past?

MKI: In the past, it was good. Everybody was friendly, you know. There was a Crabbe family right opposite our place. And there was Kaainoa, Hawaiian people. There was Andrade. There was Ito and Silva. And a German family next to us. We were all friendly in those days. But now days, the young people come around, don't work, drink beer all day, and steal whatever they can. That's not a good place to live in now.

MK0: What do you hope for Kalihi's future? How would you like it to be in the future?

MKI: I think the land value is so high now, unless you have a good fortune, plenty of money, I don't think any individual can develop those places. You know, the Kamehameha Shopping Center? That used to be a cow pasture, before. Do you remember that? There used to be kiawe trees all over. And I tried to lease some land over there, but by then, the Fujieki family had leased the whole place. They developed that shopping center, and they're doing good.

MK0: Now, as you look back on your life, what are your thoughts on your life as a doctor?

MKI: Well, my life as a doctor was very satisfying. I liked my job. But in 1969, I suddenly lost my hearing on the right side, but my left ear was pretty good then. I could practice. But gradually, my left ear got bad, so, well, I thought it was about time for me to quit. Another thing that made me make up my mind was that I had a thorough physical examination, including the X-ray of my brain. They call it a CAT scan, where they cut up your brain into many pieces. The neurologist found that I had a dilated vein in my left ventricle. And I thought to myself, "Well, if I'm going to have a stroke and die, I don't want to be working all the time." So, I quit.

MK0: You've been married since 1940. You have two children, both of whom are involved in the practice.

MKI: Well, my son is the doctor, and my daughter is the receptionist.

MK0: What are your thoughts about the progression of your family? Your father came from Japan, was out in Makaha Valley. Your brother worked as a customs agent. You yourself became a doctor, and now your son is a doctor. What are your thoughts on the progression of your family?

MKI: Well, I think I was the most fortunate of the six boys that we have, in that, my brother trusted me and sent me my tuition and my living allowance. Tuition in those days was about \$350 a year. Board and room was thirty-five dollars a month. He used to send me fifty dollars, so I had fifteen dollars (chuckles) left to spend.

Of course, in New Orleans, those days, taxi fare from anyplace outside of the middle, Canal Street, was twenty cents. Twenty cents for any

number of people. Five people, well, it's less than four cents. (Chuckles) So, we used to hire a taxi and go down. Streetcar used to be five cents, you know. But five people, five cents each is twenty-five cents. You save five (chuckles) cents.

MKO: So, you consider yourself very fortunate in that your brother helped support you through your medical education?

MKI: Yes, mm hmm. My younger brother is an artist. Well, he went to University of Hawaii. And he went to San Francisco to--I don't know what art school, but he started over there for a while. And then, he started working for an advertising company. But artists are hard people to get along with. So, he quit. When I got through my internship and passed through Los Angeles, I saw him driving a truck.

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 11-19-2-84; SIDE ONE

MKO: So, you met your brother in Los Angeles. He was driving the truck, so you were saying that you two should go back to Hawaii?

MKI: Mm hmm [yes].

MKO: So, in that year, both of you came back?

MKI: Both of us came back, yes. Those days, plane fare was \$300 one way, but if you took the President Line. . . . Do you know what the President Line is?

MKO: Mm hmm [yes].

MKI: The President Line. It was President Hoover that we rode, I think. The steerage was fifty-five dollars. Of course, took you five and a half days to come back, but fifty-five dollars and \$300 make a whole lot of difference.

MKO: So, both of you came back and what did you brother do as a career after . . .

MKI: He's still an artist yet. I have a one brother above me. When he came out from Waipahu, he was little too old to go to elementary school, so they didn't accept him. And he started working when he was about fourteen or fifteen [in the construction industry].

MKO: So, it seems that different people in your family entered different careers then, yeah?

MKI: Yes, uh huh. My brother older than him, well, he trained as a

mechanic. He was working for Schuman Company for a long time, but he started repairing wrecks, you know. Body work. He started his own body works in Kakaako. He's known as the City Body and Fender Work. He worked over there for a while and trained his son to do the same work. The son is doing good. And the grandson is taking the place (chuckles) now.

MK0: So, that's another three generations in the same occupation.

MKI: Yes, mm hmm. My oldest brother is working for the second brother. No, the third brother, I mean. My second brother used to work at the customs office.

MK0: You were mentioning that he was probably one of the early nisei that were employed?

MKI: He was the first one to be employed at the customs office. What he did was took an examination. What kind of a examination that now?

MK0: Civil service?

MKI: Civil service examination. And he made good marks on it. That was for Pearl Harbor. But when he went to Pearl Harbor, they weren't employing Japanese employees at that time, and they said they won't hire Japanese, so he went to complain to the Civil Service Commission. And the Civil Service Commission told him, "Look, they don't trust Japanese at Pearl Harbor, so why don't you wait? We'll give you some good job." And then, when a customs job opened, he was hired over there.

MK0: What year was that?

MKI: Chee, that was about 1923, I think. He worked at the customs office until he was seventy years old. He's sick now, but. . . . He was the brother that sent me to medical school.

MK0: Now that, you know, I'm going to close the interview, I was wondering if you had any last comments that you'd like to leave on the record about Kalihi's past or your feelings about your life or Kalihi?

MKI: My life at Kalihi, when I first opened my office over there, people used to call me a darn fool. Even contractors used to tell me, "Chee, I had a person hurt, but you so far away that we sent him to Downtown doctor." And for a while I thought maybe I made a mistake opening my office over here. But gradually people knew that I was over there. I found out that friends of the family never patronize you in the beginning. After you become busy, they come trotting along. In the beginning, they don't trust you at all. Well, that's, I think, natural, you know.

MK0: But after a while, it picked up?



MKI: Yes, uh huh.

MK0: I'm going to close the interview here.

MKI: Okay.

MK0: Thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW

[NOTE: Dr. Kimura added the following to his transcript.]

In forty years of medical practice in Kalihi I have found great changes in Kalihi. From a sleepy town in which automobiles used to pass every ten minutes on King Street going either towards town or towards Ewa, it has become a very busy town. There were no banks in Kalihi in the '40s but now there are five bank branches in Kalihi. In addition there are many savings and loan companies.

If a person left Kalihi in the '40s and came back to see Kalihi, I don't think he will recognize Kalihi at all. The greatest developments in Kalihi are: the Kalihi Shopping Center, First National Bank, First Interstate Bank building, the building where International Savings and Loan is located, Mr. Eddie Ching's Super Market which is occupied by Lung Fung and Kalihi Super Meats, Kalihi Medical Center, Central Pacific Bank building built by Mr. Horita, Winston Estate Building built by Kam Tai Lee, Bank of Hawaii Branch building, Kalihi Queen's Market, Muraoka Building now owned by American Savings and Loan Company, Upside Down Auto Parts building, People's Bank building, 7-Eleven stores, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and lastly, on the corner of Naopala and King Street is my building.

The population of Kalihi has changed greatly. At first, most of the places were occupied by Portuguese, Japanese, and Hawaiians, but at present there is a large population of Filipinos who immigrated after the war.

Finally, I want to thank the many patients who have supported me during my nearly forty years of practice in Kalihi. I have enjoyed every bit of the time I was practicing medicine in Kalihi, and seeing my patients recover from illness was my greatest pleasure.

# **KALIHI: Place of Transition**

**Vol. I**

**ETHNIC STUDIES ORAL  
HISTORY PROJECT**

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